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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/594,072	09/25/2006	Carsten Wendelstorf	1703 1566US	1852
29894 7590 09/24/2008 DREISS, FUHLENDORF, STEIMLE & BECKER POSTFACH 10 37 62 D-70032 STUTTGART, GERMANY				
EXAMINER				
REICHL, KARIN M				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
3761				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
09/24/2008		PAPER		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

# Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/594,072

**Applicant(s)**

WENDELSTORF, CARSTEN

**Examiner**

Karin M. Reichle

**Art Unit**

3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 September 2006.  
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.  
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 26-50 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6) ☒ Claim(s) 26-50 is/are rejected.  
7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 September 2006 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB-08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/25/06  
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_  
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application  
6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Response to Amendment***

1. The Preliminary amendment to the specification filed 9-25-06 can not be entered since the amendments to pages 10 and 12 do not set forth with specificity the position that such are to be entered, e.g. line numbers, and the amendment to page 16 is an amendment to the claims section not the specification.

### ***Specification***

#### ***Drawings***

2. The drawings are objected to because in the Figures are replete with informalities. For example, in Figures 2 and 4-5, a clear view of the absorbing element including all its various topological areas should be clearly set forth. Also in Figure 5 the components, including the lines and/or arrows thereto, which are beneath/underlie other structure should be shown in dashed lines, note Figure 6, i.e. the absorbing element and distributing layer should be shown in dashed lines. This also applies to the portion of the absorbing element underlying the distributing layer in Figure 2. Figure 6 is not a cross-section of Figure 5, e.g. where is layer 40 in Figure 6? The Figures are not commensurate with what is described as being shown in the Figures on pages 10-11, e.g. Figure 2 does not show merely a top view of the absorbing element. See also the following paragraphs. The drawings should be carefully reviewed and revised, as necessary. Applicant is thanked in advance for his/her cooperation in placing the drawings in proper form. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office

action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

3. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the absorbing element as claimed in claims 38-39, as best understood, see page 7, sixth to last line to page 8, line 7, must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must

be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

### *Description*

4. The following guidelines illustrate the preferred layout for the specification of a utility application. These guidelines are suggested for the applicant's use.

### **Arrangement of the Specification**

As provided in 37 CFR 1.77(b), the specification of a utility application should include the following sections in order. Each of the lettered items should appear in upper case, without underlining or bold type, as a section heading. If no text follows the section heading, the phrase "Not Applicable" should follow the section heading:

- (a) TITLE OF THE INVENTION.
- (b) CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS.
- (c) STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT.
- (d) THE NAMES OF THE PARTIES TO A JOINT RESEARCH AGREEMENT.
- (e) INCORPORATION-BY-REFERENCE OF MATERIAL SUBMITTED ON A COMPACT DISC.
- (f) BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION.
  - (1) Field of the Invention.
  - (2) Description of Related Art including information disclosed under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
- (g) BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION.
- (h) BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING(S).
- (i) DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION.
- (j) CLAIM OR CLAIMS (commencing on a separate sheet).
- (k) ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE (commencing on a separate sheet).

Art Unit: 3761

- (I) **SEQUENCE LISTING** (See MPEP § 2424 and 37 CFR 1.821-1.825. A "Sequence Listing" is required on paper if the application discloses a nucleotide or amino acid sequence as defined in 37 CFR 1.821(a) and if the required "Sequence Listing" is not submitted as an electronic document on compact disc).

### **Content of Specification**

- (a) **Title of the Invention**: See 37 CFR 1.72(a) and MPEP § 606. The title of the invention should be placed at the top of the first page of the specification unless the title is provided in an application data sheet. The title of the invention should be brief but technically accurate and descriptive, preferably from two to seven words may not contain more than 500 characters.
- (b) **Cross-References to Related Applications**: See 37 CFR 1.78 and MPEP § 201.11.
- (c) **Statement Regarding Federally Sponsored Research and Development**: See MPEP § 310.
- (d) **The Names Of The Parties To A Joint Research Agreement**: See 37 CFR 1.71(g).
- (e) **Incorporation-By-Reference Of Material Submitted On a Compact Disc**: The specification is required to include an incorporation-by-reference of electronic documents that are to become part of the permanent United States Patent and Trademark Office records in the file of a patent application. See 37 CFR 1.52(e) and MPEP § 608.05. Computer program listings (37 CFR 1.96(c)), "Sequence Listings" (37 CFR 1.821(c)), and tables having more than 50 pages of text were permitted as electronic documents on compact discs beginning on September 8, 2000.
- (f) **Background of the Invention**: See MPEP § 608.01(c). The specification should set forth the Background of the Invention in two parts:
- (1) **Field of the Invention**: A statement of the field of art to which the invention pertains. This statement may include a paraphrasing of the applicable U.S. patent classification definitions of the subject matter of the claimed invention. This item may also be titled "Technical Field."
  - (2) **Description of the Related Art including information disclosed under 37 CFR 1.97 and 37 CFR 1.98**: A description of the related art known to the applicant and including, if applicable, references to specific related art and problems involved in the prior art which are solved by the applicant's invention. This item may also be titled "Background Art."

- (g) Brief Summary of the Invention: See MPEP § 608.01(d). A brief summary or general statement of the invention as set forth in 37 CFR 1.73. The summary is separate and distinct from the abstract and is directed toward the invention rather than the disclosure as a whole. The summary may point out the advantages of the invention or how it solves problems previously existent in the prior art (and preferably indicated in the Background of the Invention). In chemical cases it should point out in general terms the utility of the invention. If possible, the nature and gist of the invention or the inventive concept should be set forth. Objects of the invention should be treated briefly and only to the extent that they contribute to an understanding of the invention.
- (h) Brief Description of the Several Views of the Drawing(s): See MPEP § 608.01(f). A reference to and brief description of the drawing(s) as set forth in 37 CFR 1.74.
- (i) Detailed Description of the Invention: See MPEP § 608.01(g). A description of the preferred embodiment(s) of the invention as required in 37 CFR 1.71. The description should be as short and specific as is necessary to describe the invention adequately and accurately. Where elements or groups of elements, compounds, and processes, which are conventional and generally widely known in the field of the invention described and their exact nature or type is not necessary for an understanding and use of the invention by a person skilled in the art, they should not be described in detail. However, where particularly complicated subject matter is involved or where the elements, compounds, or processes may not be commonly or widely known in the field, the specification should refer to another patent or readily available publication which adequately describes the subject matter.
- (j) Claim or Claims: See 37 CFR 1.75 and MPEP § 608.01(m). The claim or claims must commence on separate sheet or electronic page (37 CFR 1.52(b)(3)). Where a claim sets forth a plurality of elements or steps, each element or step of the claim should be separated by a line indentation. There may be plural indentations to further segregate subcombinations or related steps. See 37 CFR 1.75 and MPEP § 608.01(i)-(p).
- (k) Abstract of the Disclosure: See MPEP § 608.01(f). A brief narrative of the disclosure as a whole in a single paragraph of 150 words or less commencing on a separate sheet following the claims. In an international application which has entered the national stage (37 CFR 1.491(b)), the applicant need not submit an abstract commencing on a separate sheet if an abstract was published with the international application under PCT Article 21. The abstract that appears on the cover page of the pamphlet published by the International Bureau (IB) of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is the abstract that will be used by the USPTO. See MPEP § 1893.03(c).

- (l) Sequence Listing. See 37 CFR 1.821-1.825 and MPEP §§ 2421-2431. The requirement for a sequence listing applies to all sequences disclosed in a given application, whether the sequences are claimed or not. See MPEP § 2421.02.

5. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because terminology which can be inferred, i.e. “The invention relates to”, and legal terminology, i.e. “comprising”, should be avoided. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

6. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: The disclosure is replete with informalities. For example, the specification should include the sections set forth supra with each section preceded by the appropriate section heading. The Summary of the Invention section, i.e. a description of the claimed invention, and the invention of the claims should be commensurate in scope, see MPEP 608.01(d), e.g. where are the specifics of the test set forth on pages 3-4 set forth in the claims? Is Applicant setting forth definitions in the paragraph bridging pages 2-3? The description of the Figures on lines 10-11 is not commensurate with what is shown in the Figures. The last line of page 10 appears to be missing a word or words. The disclosure should be carefully reviewed and revised, as necessary. Applicant is thanked in advance for his/her cooperation in placing the drawings in proper form.

Appropriate correction is required.

### ***Claim Objections***

7. Claims 26-50 are objected to because of the following informalities: On lines 2-3 “, which may...materials,” should be deleted (Note line 4 “comprising”). In claim 4, line 2 should be rewritten as --include varying separation distances between cuff bottom lines--. Claims 40-41 and 43, line 1 are missing a word or words. Appropriate correction is required.



***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

8. Claims 27 and 29-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It is unclear whether the broader ranges are being further limited by the narrower ranges or not.

***Claim Language Interpretation***

9. The claim terminology will be interpreted in light of the definitions set forth in the paragraph bridging pages 2-3, and thereby the test set forth on pages 3-4, and page 8, last 4 lines. However it is noted that the specific unit area of such mass as claimed has not been set forth, i.e. the specific dimensions of what constitutes a unit has not be set forth, i.e. specific length, width and thickness of a "unit" have not been set forth. Note also page 2, lines 11-14, page 11, lines 12-15, page 5, lines 12-16, page 6, lines 16-24 (as best understood about the center two-eighths of the article is the crotch area (note the crotch area of the absorbing component or the relation of the component to such area of the article has not been set forth)), page 7, sixth to last line-page 8, line 7. Any other terminology will be interpreted in light of its usual, e.g. dictionary, definition. With regard to claims 27 and 29-30, due to the lack of clarity discussed in paragraph 8, the claim is considered to require a mass per unit area increase within the broadest claimed range. Note MPEP 2131.03, I. and II. and 2144.05. Claim 38 is a product by process claim, see MPEP 2113. The end product of claim 38 is interpreted to require an absorbing element component as claimed in claim 26 having at least a portion thereof which is of uniform thickness.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103***

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claims 26-50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Pieniak et al '442.

Claim 26: See Claim Language Interpretation section supra, hereinafter also referred to as CLI, and '442 at Figures, and col. 4, lines 2-60, col. 6, lines 20-48, col. 7, lines 3-27, 33-58, col. 8, lines 4-20, 26-33, col. 8, line 66-col. 9, line 55, col. 10, lines 22-56, i.e. '442 teaches a disposable hygiene article 10 having an absorbing element component 14 for storing body liquids, which may contain superabsorbent materials, see cited portions of col. 8, the absorbing element component comprising a first area having a mass per unit area of absorbent material that increases in a transverse direction towards side edges of the hygiene article, e.g., see Figures, portions of 14 located transversely adjacent to areas 40 and col. 4, lines 9-18 and col. 10, lines 22-33. Claim 26 further claims a storage capacity of a section extending in a longitudinal direction over 20 to 100 % of a length of the absorbing element component is substantially constant along said longitudinal direction. See CLI supra and the cited portions of '442. While

'442 does not explicitly teach a section extending in the longitudinal direction over the claimed percentage length having a storage capacity which is constant as determined by the test set forth in the instant application, see CLI *supra*, it does teach a section, e.g. the central section of 14 between sections 40 as seen in the Figures which extends over, e.g., 100% of the length of the element 14 of substantially constant and/or uniform composition for the same purposes, see col. 7, lines 3-12 and compare to the second full paragraph on page 2 of the instant application. Therefore it is the Examiner's first position that there is sufficient factual evidence for one to conclude that such absorbing component of '442 also inherently possesses the claimed storage capacity when tested in the same manner as that of the claimed component. See MPEP 2112.01. See also *In re Fitzgerald*, 619 F.2d 67, 70, 205 USPQ 594, 596 (CCPA 1980), i.e. the burden to show that this, i.e. materials are substantially identical, in fact, is not the case is shifted to Applicant. In any case, note again that '442 recognizes the same problem and also desires the same properties/combination of properties as the instant application as well as capacity to absorb in the longitudinal direction being a result effective variable, see the cited portions of '442. Note also MPEP 2141.05. Therefore, it is the Examiner's second position that even if the prior art does not include the storage capacity, the general conditions of the claim are disclosed thereby and it is not inventive, i.e. it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, to discover the optimum or workable ranges, i.e. Applicant's ranges, by routine experimentation, *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233 (CCPA 1955).

Claim 27: The section of constant storage capacity extends over 30 to 90% of a length of the absorbing element component, see CLI *supra*, the discussion of claim 26 and note that the

claim does not require extension over only such range, i.e. a section which extends 100% extends the claimed range.

Claim 28: The absorbing element component further comprises a second area having a mass per unit area of absorbent material which increases from a rear and/or front area of the hygiene article towards a crotch area thereof, see, e.g., Figure 10, and col. 8, lines 4-9.

Claim 29: The first area of increasing mass per unit area of absorbent material increases in the transverse direction by 30 to 200 % with “sufficient specificity”, see CLI, e.g., MPEP 2131.03 and, e.g., col. 7, lines 30-45, e.g. the amount of mass increases from more than 0% to 100%.

Claim 30: The second area of increasing mass per unit area of absorbent material, e.g. the center portion of 14 between 40, has a mass per unit area increase in the longitudinal direction of 50 to 500 % with “sufficient specificity”, see CLI, e.g., MPEP 2131.03, the discussion of claim 28 and, e.g., col. 9, lines 42-46.

Claim 31: The maximum mass per unit area of the second area of increasing mass per unit area is larger than a maximum mass per unit area of the first area of increasing mass per unit area, see, e.g. the discussion of claims 28-30 and Figures 5 and 10, i.e. the maximum transverse mass increase, e.g. at rear ends of partially extending elements 40, is less than maximum longitudinal mass increase, e.g. between front and rear ends of 14 between elements 40.

Claim 32: The first area of increasing mass per unit area is separated from a center of a crotch area of the hygiene article, see, e.g., Figures 3 and 6, i.e. transversely separated.

Claim 33: The hygiene article includes two first areas are provided, which are separated from a center of the crotch area of the hygiene article, see discussion of claim 32.

Claim 34: The first area or a line of maximum mass per unit area of the first area extends in the longitudinal direction on both sides of the hygiene article over at least 15 % of a length of the absorbing element component, see Figures and discussion of claims *supra*.

Claim 35: The first area or a line of maximum mass per unit area of the first area extends in the longitudinal direction on both sides along side edge areas of the hygiene article, see Figures.

Claim 36: The first area of increasing mass per unit area in the transverse direction and the second area of increasing mass per unit area in the longitudinal direction are disposed in direct abutment to or overlap with each other, see Figures.

Claim 37: The width of the absorbing element component starting from a rear and/or front area of the hygiene article is reduced towards a crotch area, see Figures and col. 6, lines 20-24.

Claim 38: The absorbing element component is compressed to a substantially uniform thickness, see CLI *supra* and, e.g., col. 4, lines 37-39, col. 7, lines 53-58 and col. 10, lines 45-56.

Claim 39: The areas of increasing mass per unit area also form areas of increasing density, see discussion of claims *supra*, esp. claim 38, i.e. col. 10, lines 45-46.

Claim 40: The absorbing element component comprises at least two absorbing element layers, e.g., 16 and 44.

Claim 41: The absorbing element component has a substantially uniform mass per unit area, e.g. element 44 or see cited portions *supra*, e.g. uniform thickness and composition of portions, see discussion of claim 38.

Claim 42: The absorbing element component has an absorbing element layer comprising cross-linked cellulose fibers, see cited portions of col. 8.

Claim 43: The hygiene article further comprises cuff elements 22 or 24 and/or 26 extending substantially in a longitudinal direction and elevated at least in certain areas which form lateral outlet barriers and are fixed at least along a cuff bottom line, see Figure 3 adjacent 23, on a side of the article facing a user's body, see Figures 1-3.

Claim 44: The cuff elements have varying separation distances between cuff bottom lines, see paragraph 7 supra and, e.g. Figure 3, i.e. the cuff 24 bottom lines have a different separation space than the cuff 26 bottom lines and/or Figure 2 which shows the cuff bottom line being non-linear.

Claim 45: The first area of larger mass per unit area comprises at least one partial area in which a mutual separation between the cuff bottom lines is larger than outside of said partial area, see again, e.g. Figure 2 and the line denoting the cuff bottom line adjacent the arrow from 22 and/or Figure 3, and note the separation between cuff 26 lines in a first area is larger than the separation between cuff 24 bottom lines which is outside of such first area.

Claim 46: The partial area is disposed outside of a central longitudinal section of the hygiene article and at a separation from a center of a crotch area of the hygiene article, see discussion of claims 32 and 33 supra and/or the discussion of claim 45. Also note the line denoting the cuff bottom line in Figure appears larger in the rear portion than other portions and larger along line 3-3 than at other portions.

Claim 47: The cuff elements are positioned such that the cuff bottom lines are disposed at a maximum separation from each other in the longitudinal direction, see Figures 2-3 and note that the claims do not require a smaller minimum separation.

Claim 48: The maximum separation is entirely within a portion of the first area, i.e. since the first area can extend 100% the maximum separation shown in the Figures is entirely therewithin.

Claim 49: The maximum separation between the cuff bottom lines is disposed in a front area and/or a rear area of the hygiene article, see, e.g., Figures 2-3, and the discussion of claims 45-48. It is noted that the maximum separation is not claimed as only being in the front and/or rear area.

Claim 50: The absorbing element component comprises a mixture of fibers and particulate superabsorbent materials, see cited portions of col. 8 supra.

### ***Conclusion***

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The prior art cited but not applied also teaches at least some of the disclosed and/or claimed features. See esp. Kimura '052, Uni-charm EP '477 and Roessler '457.

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karin M. Reichle whose telephone number is (571) 272-4936. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tanya Zalukaeva can be reached on (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Karin M. Reichle/  
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3761

September 19, 2008